

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 14, 2009

Larry Chisolm  
District Attorney, Chatham County  
133 Montgomery Street  
Savannah, GA 31401

Dear District Attorney Chisolm:

We, the members of Congressional Black Caucus, urge you as the District Attorney of Chatham County, Georgia, to reconsider moving forward with the execution of Troy Anthony Davis. As you know, Mr. Davis was convicted and sentenced to death almost exclusively on the basis of witness testimony. However, it is our understanding that 7 of the 9 witnesses who originally testified against him have now recanted, many of them alleging that they were coerced by the police into falsely testifying at the trial. Because our federal appellate courts have been unwilling or unable to grant him an evidentiary hearing based on these witnesses and their allegations of police coercion, serious questions about Mr. Davis' trial, and the reliability of his conviction, remain unanswered. We hope that you reconsider moving forward with this execution based on the recently uncovered evidence and the serious doubts about Mr. Davis guilt.

We recognize that the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles denied clemency to Mr. Davis on September 12, 2007, but we also know that the Board's decision can be revisited at any time, and that, with your strong support you can prevent a terrible miscarriage of justice. We also believe that in a case such as this, where new evidence not only suggests that Troy Davis might be innocent, but also points to the possible guilt of one of the witnesses who testified against Mr. Davis at trial, re-opening the investigation would be a prudent option that could bring all involved in this tragic episode one step closer to real justice.

This case, and the failure at multiple levels to provide an adequate review of a compelling innocence claim, underscores fundamental problems that, if unchecked, can seriously undermine public faith in our criminal justice system. It is up to principled leaders like you to take the actions necessary to ensure that flaws are corrected, that wrongs are righted, and that justice prevails over injustice. And there could be no greater injustice than the execution of a man with these credible innocent claims.

It is this concern for fairness and justice that has led hundreds of thousands of ordinary Americans to write to Georgia officials urging that this execution be halted. We further believe it was this same concern for justice that prompted the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles to state, when Mr. Davis' execution was stayed in July 2007, that the Board "will not allow an execution to proceed in this State unless and until its members are convinced that there is no doubt as to the guilt of the accused."

Without an evidentiary hearing on the witnesses who have recanted, and on the allegations of police coercion, doubts about Mr. Davis' guilt will always persist. An evidentiary hearing in a court of law, where all the relevant parties – the witnesses, the law enforcement officers involved – are placed under oath and subjected to questioning and rigorous cross-examination, is the only adequate way to really get at the truth.

We believe that you can, and should, take the necessary action to prevent this execution from taking place. The integrity of our justice system it is at stake, and the life of a possibly innocent man depends on it.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Al Green

John Lewis

Glenn D. Hastings James E. Clyburn

Barbara

James E. Edwards

Yvette D. Clarke

Marvin D. Dudge

Cornelia Barbara Lee

William F. Hunt Sanford D. Boring

Ernest Lee Ronald Payne

David Scott Gregory W. Meeks

John Long Jr. Danny K. Davis

Gleanor H. Norton Shirley Jackson

Lillian E. Watson J. M. Chitt

Emanuel

Hank Johnson

Congressional Black Congress Members who signed the letter:

Representative John Lewis

Representative Al Green

Representative Alcee L. Hastings

Representative James Clyburn, Democratic Whip

Representative Bobby Scott Chairman, House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and  
Homeland Security

Representative Donna Edwards

Representative Yvette Clark

Representative Marcia L. Fudge

Representative Corinne Brown

Representative Barbara Lee

Representative Melvin L. Watt, Member, House Judiciary Committee

Representative Sanford Bishop

Representative Gwen Moore

Representative Donald Payne

Representative David Scott

Representative Gregory Meeks

Representative John Conyers, Chairman, House Judiciary Committee

Representative Danny K. Davis

Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton

Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, Member, House Judiciary Committee

Representative Diane E. Watson

Representative Donna Christensen

Representative Emanuel Cleaver

Representative Henry "Hank" Johnson, Member, House Judiciary Committee